Library
of the
University of Toronto

1162/3

Imprimatur,

Hen. Maurice
July 9. P. D. N.
1687. Cant. a Sacris.

Imprimatur,

Hen. Maurice R^mo in Christo
July 9. P. D. *Wilhelmo* Archiep.
1687. *Cant.* a Sacris.

REASONS
WHY
A Protestant
Should not Turn
PAPIST:
OR,
Protestant Prejudices
Against the
Roman Catholic Religion;
PROPOS'D,
In a LETTER to a Romish Priest.

By a Person of Quality.

LONDON:
Printed by *H. Clark*, for *John Taylor* at the *Ship* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, 1687.

THE

CONTENTS.

I. THE *Occasion of this Discourse.*

II. *That the Church of* Rome *is neither Catholick, nor Infallible.*

III. *The true Notions of the Catholick Church.*

IV. *The true Notions of Schism, Heresie, and Apostacy.*

V. *That Protestants are not guilty either of Schism, Heresie, or Apostacy.*

VI. *The Protestant and Romish Sense of an Infallible Church.*

VII. *That Christ left no Infallible visible Judge in the Church, and that there is no necessity of any such Judge.*

VIII. *The* Roman Catholicks *Arguments for the Infallibility of their Church, Answer'd.*

IX. *That*

IX. *That whatever is said in Scripture of the Church, may be applied with a greater appearance of Truth to the* Greek *Church, than to the Church of* Rome.

X. *That Transubstantiation strikes at the foundation of the Christian Religion; that it was unknown to the Primitive Church.*

XI. *The Novelty of the* Roman Catholick *Religion, as it is now settled.*

XII. *That* Protestants, *especially of the* Church of England, *are more Loyal by their Principles than* Roman Catholicks.

Reasons

REASONS
WHY
A Protestant
Should not Turn
PAPIST, &c.

The Introduction.

SIR,

I Know not well what you meant, when not long ago, after a free Enquiry in a familiar Converse about the Right Choice of Religion, you was pleas'd to call me a *meer Christian*, but sure I am 'twas a better World when all such as really professed Christianity were but *meer Christians*, I mean, believed nothing more, under pain of Eternal Damnation, than what Christ and his Apostles had taught them: if this, *Sir*, was your meaning, I am indeed, and with the Grace of God ever shall be a *meer Christian:*

stian: and why should I find my self affronted by being so styled, since the Fathers of the Primitive times were in the afore-mentioned sence *meer Christians,* as believing nothing to be Articles of Divine Faith beyond what Christ and his Apostles had declared to be so. I must not then, as a Protestant, be offended at this uncommon Reproach, because it giveth us the *Idea* of one that professeth the Purity of the Christian Religion, without any mixture either of Error or Superstition, so as I love to take every thing in the best sence it can bear, rather than relapse, I shall be thankful to you for so honourable a Title: Yet if I must take this Expression as somewhat reflecting, I shall revenge my self no otherwise, but by telling you, what I fancy you will readily grant, that you are something beyond a *meer Christian,* since neither the Scripture, nor the three Creeds, contain all the Articles of your Faith: but as I was not at all concern'd at this your odd and unexpected Reproach, which I thought deserved rather an Innocent Smile, than a Serious Reflection; so 'tis not upon this account that I now undertake to write this Letter, but meerly because you very confidently said, that I remain'd a Protestant upon no very good Grounds, but upon meer Prejudices, which you could easily take off, if I would declare to you what really they were; which because I could not then conveniently, I promised I would perform at another time, and now to acquit my self of my Promise, I shall offer to your consideration some of what you call Prejudices, and I shall venture to style good and solid Reasons why I cannot resolve upon a Change, would I never so fain, in the present juncture of our Affairs, embrace the Roman Catholick Religion.

First

FIrſt then, I am of opinion, that the Church of *Rome*, as 'tis now ſetled in the World, is founded upon two falſe Suppoſitions, *vid.* its *pretended Catholicity*, or univerſality, *and Infallibility:* I wondred always to hear her ſtyl'd *Catholick* by the *Romaniſts* in this ſence, that whoſoever acknowledgeth her not to be the only true Chriſtian Church in the World, out of which there is no ſalvation, liveth not in Catholick communion: which is ſuch a groundleſs Propoſition as deſerves rather to be laught at, than ſeriouſly refuted, and no leſs abſurd, than if the Church of *England* called herſelf the whole Catholick Church, tho' ſhe be but a part thereof, and not the greateſt neither. The Church of *Rome* then, whether it be conſider'd as the particular Dioceſs of *Rome*, or as comprehending all thoſe, whatever part of the World they live in, that acknowledge the Pope as ſupreme Paſtor, is no leſs a particular Church, than that of *England*, of *Greece*, and of the *Abyſſins*, yea, if compared to all the Chriſtians throughout the whole World, it is by much the far leſſer part of the Catholick Church, eſpecially if we reflect but a moment what vaſt numbers of Chriſtians, diſſenting from the Church of *Rome*, are to be found in *Aſia*, *Africa*, and both in the Eaſtern and Northern parts of *Europe:* ſo the *Romaniſts* are at a loſs what to ſay in any Debate about Matters of Controverſie, when they are made ſenſible of their applying to a particular, what is only to be underſtood of the Catholick, or Univerſal Church, which I conceive to be nothing elſe but *the diffuſive body of Chriſtians in all Ages under Chriſt as their inviſible Head, and their reſpective Princes, Superiours, and Biſhops, as their viſible Governours.* 'Tis eaſie now, if you remember this Deſcription, to ſtop the mouths of *Roman Catholicks*, who raiſe ſo much duſt among the unthinking multitude by this very word, *the Church*, but miſapplied, or not underſtood: when then they ſay, the Church teacheth this, or that Doctrine, as for inſtance, *Tranſubſtantiation*, *Purgatory*, *the lawfulneſs of Saints*, *and Image-Worſhip*, believe them not: for they underſtand by the *Church*, either the particular Church of *Rome*, or its Clergy, or ſome General Council, as that of *Lateran*, *Florence*,

rence, or *Trent*. Now neither of theſe three is the Church, and conſequently their Deciſions are not to be ſtyled the Deciſions of the Church, in caſe they do not agree with the ſence of the Univerſal Church in all Ages: and then I believe them not upon the account of their Authority, but by reaſon of the General Conſent of all Ages, and eſpecially of the primitive and pureſt times of the Church.

We may give ſome hints out of this, and the foregoing Conſiderations, what properly is meant by Hereſie, Apoſtacy, and Schiſm, and who are to be reckon'd Hereticks, Schiſmaticks, and Apoſtates, that it may the better appear how unjuſtly either Hereſie, Schiſm, or Apoſtaſie, is laid to the charge of all other Churches by the Church of *Rome*.

Hereſie then is, an obſtinate and wilful denyal of what is held by the Univerſal Church. Schiſm is a cauſleſs Separation from any Chriſtian Church whatſoever; And Apoſtaſie is an entire deſertion of the Chriſtian Faith, to embrace Turkiciſm, or any other not reveal'd Religion.

Firſt then, 'tis clear, that all the Diſſenters from the Church of *Rome* are not Apoſtats, becauſe they ſtill retain the Fundamental Points of the Chriſtian Religion, and reject only thoſe that the *Roman Catholicks* would have us to believe Fundamental upon the account of the Infallibity, which they could never yet prove of the General, or rather Imperial Councils.

Secondly, They are not Schiſmaticks, they had but too weighty Reaſons to ſeparate from the Church of *Rome*: the very taking away of the Cup from the Laity, (to mention no other of its known Errors in this place,) againſt the Univerſal Practice, yea, of their own Church too, during Thirteen hundred years, and more, and againſt the Expreſs Command and Inſtitution of Chriſt, was a cauſe ſufficient for a juſt, lawful, and neceſſary Separation, ſince that Church became ſo conceited of its own Power and Authority, as to think it could lawfully alter or change what Chriſt had ſo ſolemnly inſtituted, and commanded, when he ſaid, *Drink ye all of this.*

As

As to Heresie; We are often charged with it by *Roman Catholicks*, but without any proof, unless we are to believe all such to be Hereticks as believe not the additional Articles of the Church of *Rome*. Which is indeed their real meaning, when they call us Hereticks: but their confidence in this Point is grounded on that notoriously false supposition of their Infallibility: for as I always conceived Infallibility to be a no less essential Attribute of the Divine Nature, than Omnipotency; so I thought and think it still a no less contradiction to imagine to ourselves an Infallible Creature, than to conceive an Omnipotent One, and not at the same time God: Tho' I allow that a Creature, how fallible soever, by the intrinsical Principles of its own Nature, may perhaps never actually fail by a Special Protection from that Unerrable Being above: But I am on the other side very confident, that God has no where promised his Unerring Spirit either to the Pope or to any of the General Councils whensoever they shall undertake to decide Matters of Faith: for as God permits Sin, so why should we think it absurd to say, that he permits Errors likewise, and that in his Church too, for ends best known to himself, and which we are not to dive into. I know indeed, and no *Protestant* I suppose will deny it, that the Universal Church in this sence only may be called Infallible, that notwithstanding all the Efforts of the Gates of Hell to prevail against it, the True Doctrine of Christ shall be still taught, and held in some part of the World by a particular providence of God over his Church: and this is the only rational meaning of all those Passages to be examined hereafter, which the *Roman Catholicks* are us'd to propose as Proofs of the Infallibility of the Church of *Rome*: But their main drift is, and must be, to shew either by Reason, or Authority, First, That there is in the Church an Infallible Visible Judge of Controversie; And, Secondly, Who is this Infallible Visible Judge: For otherwise his Infallibility would be of no use to us, since we could not consult with him in order to resolve our Doubts.

But, to come more close to the Point, I would fain know from a *Roman Catholick*, if the Being of this Infallible Visible Judge be an Article of Divine Faith, that he must believe, under pain of Eternal Damnation, or a meer probable Opinion, which he may follow, or not follow, as he pleases: If the latter be granted, then the pretended certitude of the Controversies in debate between us and the *Romanists* depends upon the Decisions of Councils, that are but probably true, not infallibly; which if they once yield to, they have no right to force upon any man the belief of their additional Articles, as Purgatory, Transubstantiation, *&c.* for if it be but probable, that the Council of *Trent*, defining that there is a Purgatory, is infallible, 'tis on the other side as probable, and more too, that 'tis fallible: So I ought to make use of that Reason God has given me, and examine, Whether the Council has not actually fail'd, by comparing its Decisions, to the standing Revelation of God's Will in his written Word, as interpreted by the Fathers of the Primitive Times, or by every Man's Private Reason, where they are silent: for let unthinking and prejudic'd men say what they will, as we are all to stand or to fall by the Verdict of our own Conscience, so we ought to follow its Decisions in whatever relates to our own Spiritual Concerns: and if this be a Crime, the *Romanists* are guilty of it as well as we: for either he believes his Church infallible upon rational grounds, or upon no grounds at all; the latter I suppose he will not say, lest his belief be deservedly called foolish, and if upon rational grounds he believes the Church of *Rome* infallible, then his own Private Reason is Judge of these Grounds, and he finally proves to be for himself both Party and Judge of the Controversie: which if he may do in this Case, I know not why he may not likewise in all others. Thus, when he undertakes to prove to a *Protestant* the same Doctrine of Infallibility, he constituteth him Judge of his Reasons, and of the True Sence of the Scripture he makes use of in order to prove his Opinion.

Since

Since then you allow me the use of my Reason in the very Primary and most fundamental Article of all, the *Church Infallibility*, you have no reason to deny it to me in other things that depend upon this, and are of no less concern for the welfare of my Soul.

The ordinary Objection against this Doctrine, that it would be the source of an infinite variety of Opinions about matters of Religion, seem'd always to me to be of no force, because, besides that the Scripture says somewhere, That *Heresies*, that is, diversity of Opinions, notwithstanding all pretence to Infallibility must be, if a Man be mistaken in his Judgment, 'tis to be presum'd God will pardon him this Error, since after all possible means us'd to learn the truth, he is still persuaded of his being in the right, and that your Reasons are weaker than his: For to say, such a Man must submit his Judgment upon the account of a Superior Authority, tho' he knows not why, and is moreover satisfied of the fallibility of this Authority, yea, and of its actual Errors too in many things of great moment, 'tis all one as if you bid a Man renounce to common sence, turn a Fool, and not act rationally. 'Tis then evident to all considering Men, that every one must finally Judge for himself in matters relating to his own Spiritual welfare; for sure I am, God shall never condemn me for acting against another Man's Judgment; which certainly he will do, if I act against my own; for this and no other thing can be imputed to me as an actual Sin: Christ himself teacheth this important Truth, by his exhorting the Jews to search the Scriptures, because they gave testimony of him, where he will have them to act like rational Creatures, to make use of that reason he had given them, and to judge of the sense of the Scriptures: He does not tell them, with the Pope in a General Council, You are to remember I am the Infallible Oracle, to be believed by you without any further Examen: But since he desires them to consult the Scriptures, certainly he allows them to judge of their sense, which the Church of *Rome* will not permit us to do, assuming to herself a greater Authority than ever Christ did, who would have the Jews to rely upon their senses in reading the Scriptures, and examining his Miracles.

For-

Forasmuch as I hate an indiscreet Zeal, I cannot but be somewhat concern'd to hear some *Romanists* say, Christ had been a very unwise and unskilful Law-giver, had he not left behind him an Infallible visible Judge of Controversies; as if he could not govern his Church without an Infallible Lieutenant, as we see (if such a Comparison may be allowed of) that Earthly Princes Govern their remotest Provinces according to all the Laws of Justice and Equity, though their Substitutes be fallible Men; they only Correct them when they do fail, and send others in their room that will perform better their Trust. Where is then the necessity of an Infallible Visible Judge, for the good Government of the Church? Sure they will not say, there can be no true Church, without such a Judge, for the Jewish Church had none, and erred very grosly in condemning of Christ; yea, the very Church of *Rome* itself, till the first Council of *Nice*, wanted such a Judge, and does yet, in the Intervals of General Councils, supposing with them, that these are their Infallible Visible Judges.

Let us not then argue ourselves into an Error, with the *Romanists* thus; *There is a necessity of an Infallible Visible Judge, therefore there is one:* But rather on the contrary, *There is no Infallible Visible Judge in the Church*, therefore there is *no necessity of such a Judge*. For we ought in reason to suppose, had a Governor thus qualified, been necessary for the preserving of the Church, Christ had no doubt appointed somewhere this Infallible Visible Judge, and told his Apostles, *When I am gone, there will arise great debates and heats amongst you, concerning what is to be Believed, under pain of Damnation, and what not; but for a final Resolution in this case, you must make your Application to the Bishops of* Rome, *or to a General Council; and whatever they declare to be an Article of Divine Faith, though it be not found in Scripture, is to be look'd upon by you as such.* But where has Christ mentioned any thing of this nature? I find rather the quite contrary decided by him, since he sends the Jews to the standing Revelation of the Old Testament; *Search* (says he) *the Scriptures, for they give Testimony of me.* He never told them with the Church of *Rome*, *Believe not your own Senses, trust not to your own Reason in any case*

case relating to your Spiritual concerns, but Believe me, because I am Infallible, and my Decisions are not to be examined, but blindly received. Have we not then reason to wonder that the Church of *Rome* assumeth to herself a greater Authority than ever Christ himself did? and to hear her say in one of her General Councils, That notwithstanding the express Institution of Christ, and Command to take the Sacrament in both kinds, She thought fit, for good reasons, to order it to be taken by the Laity in one kind only, though She Herself had obeyed Christ in this point full thirteen Hundred years and more?

I always fancied no Power upon Earth could change what the first Founder of our Religion, Christ Jesus, had once established. The Church of *Rome* may as well presume to say, That though Christ has forbid Polygamy, and will have every Man to be contented with one Wife at a time, She (for good Reasons, and more plausible too than those She alledgeth for the taking away the Cup from the Laity,) thinks it convenient to allow Men more Wives than one at a time. For if the Church of *Rome* can act lawfully against Christ's Institution in one case, I know not why She may not likewise in another; which setteth the Pope and a General Council, above all that is called God, in a very literal sense, since Christ himself must submit to this Superior Authority, and see his own Orders slighted, as if they had been given out Indiscreetly, and without Judgment, or accompanied with Inconveniences which Christ foresaw not, and for which the *Romanists* think themselves not oblig'd to Obey them.

I hope these few Considerations make it appear to the unprejudic'd *Romanists*, that the Infallibility of the Church of *Rome*, or the being of an Infallible Visible Judge in that Church, is not only an improbable Doctrine, but really false and absurd. Yet this I shall make out more particularly, by answering what chiefly they are used to alledge in favour of their imaginary Infallibility.

They say then first, but very unhappily for them, That from the Supreme Court of the Jewish Synagogue, there was

was no Appeal. What then? Does it follow from thence, that the Synagogue was Infallible? What connexion is there between there being no Appeal from a Judge, and his being Infallible? I hope the *Romanists* will grant the Synagogue to have fail'd, when She condemn'd Christ. They'll do well then to bring no Argument from this Topick, to prove their own Infallibility: *But a Covenant with better Promises was given to the Church.* But where was it said that Infallibility was promised to Her? I mean, that there should be an Infallible Visible Judge, whom we should consult in all doubtful Cases, and to whose Decisions we were under pain of Damnation to submit, though they were not only above Reason, but against the constant evidence of all Mens Senses.

Heb. 6. 6.

Secondly, They are wont to raise some dust among the unwary Multitude, with these and the like Passages.

Isa. 3.2. *The Church is like a Mountain upon the top of the Mountains.*

Psal. 18.4. *Like a Tabernacle seated in the Sun.*

Isa. 49. 23. *All Nations shall flow unto her, Kings shall be her Nursing Fathers, and Queens her Nursing Mothers.*

Can any rational Man draw from these Passages any Argument proving the being of an Infallible Visible Judge? Since 'tis clear, they conclude nothing else but that the Church shall be sometimes glorious and visible to most Nations, as likewise protected by Kings and Princes. I say *sometimes*, because there is no Promise made to Her that She shall *always* be so, and in all Parts of the World. For by the Experience of foregoing Ages, we are sufficiently inform'd that She has been now and then overclouded both by Persecution and Ignorance; and the same thing may happen again, if it please God to permit both Persecution and Error, as he permits Sin, for Ends best known to himself. They lay likewise a great stress upon what Christ said to his Apostles, *Who hears you, hears me.*

Luk. 10. 16.

As then in hearing Christ, we cannot Err, so in hearing the Apostles and their Successors, we cannot Err: Which is most true of the Apostles, because they delivered nothing but what Christ had taught them, as likewise of their Successors, so long as they Teach nothing else but what was handed down

down to us from Chriſt and his Apoſtles, but we muſt try the Spirits whether they are of God or not: For if an Angel ſhould propoſe to us Articles of Faith, others than what the Apoſtles have taught us, we ought to reject them.

I would then adviſe here the *Roman Catholicks*, never to prove the Infallibility of their Church by Scripture, this being undoubtedly their weakeſt ſide, becauſe by this way of arguing, they are concluded in a circle, they could never yet get clear of, whilſt they muſt prove the Infallibility of the Church by the Scripture, and the true ſenſe of the Scripture by the very ſame Church, which amounts to nothing more, but to your believing the Church upon her own Word, without any Ground for her Infallibility diſtinct from her own Teſtimony; than which I can fancy nothing more abſurd, and more againſt common ſenſe and reaſon, unleſs we can perſuade ourſelves, that the Infallibility of the Church is a ſelf-evident Principle; which I am ſure no underſtanding *Romaniſt* will ever either think or ſay: For beſides that he never goes about to prove it by the meer Expoſition of the terms 'tis propounded in, How can any Man take that for ſelf-evident, which all Proteſtants, though to no purpoſe as yet, have required a ſolid proof of? If it were a ſufficient proof of any pretended Truth, to ſay, 'tis Self-evident, it would be eaſie to prove any falſhood imaginable at this rate. A ſelf-evident Principle, muſt be evident to all Men underſtanding the terms we expreſs it in, otherwiſe it has nothing in it of a real ſelf-evidence.

To ſhun prolixity, I ſhall mention but ſome few paſſages more the *Romaniſts* ſeem moſt to truſt to. 1. *That the Church of the living God, is the pillar and ground of truth.* 1 Tim. 3. 15. 2. *That the gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it, that he will be with her always, even to the end of the world, that he will ſend them another Comforter, even the ſpirit of truth to abide with them for ever.* Mat. 16. 18. Joh. 14. 16. 3. *That when he is come, he ſhall guide them in all truth.* 4. *That all Perſons are commanded to hear the Church, or elſe to be look'd upon as a Heathen and a Publican.* and 16. 13. Mat. 18. 17.

I anſwer firſt, That theſe paſſages, and all others of this nature, are to be underſtood of the Univerſal Church, and and however do not at all imply the neceſſity of an Infallible

Viſible Judge. The Univerſal Church then comprehending all the Chriſtian Churches of the World, is the pillar and ground of Truth, becauſe Truth is upheld by, and grounded upon the conſtant agreement of all Chriſtian Churches throughout all Ages, and not upon the authority of any particular Church, ſuch as I take the Church of *Rome* to be, whatever way we conſider it. Now the Rock upon which this Univerſal Church is built, is, the Confeſſion of St. *Peter*, and the conſtant agreement of all after Ages thereunto, and not his Perſon; otherwiſe this Rock and Foundation had fail'd when he fail'd, which I ſuppoſe will not be granted.

The never prevailing of the Gates of Hell againſt the Church, concludes as fairly for her Impeccability, as for her Infallibility, ſince the Gates of Hell prevail as much, or rather more by Sin, than by Error, which ſometimes may be invincible and guiltleſs. The Gates of Hell then ſhall never prevail againſt the Univerſal Church, becauſe no Perſecution whatſoever, whither occaſion'd by ignorance or by malice, ſhall ever exterminate wholly this Church out of the World: For if She be extinguiſh'd and baniſh'd out of one place, She will ſtill appear again and flouriſh in another, and ſo even to the end of the World, according to Chriſt's infallible promiſe; *And the Comforter ſhall abide with her for ever, and guide her into all truth*, becauſe the whole Doctrine of Chriſt ſhall be taught in ſome corner of the World, even to the conſummation of all things, though ſome particular Churches may not teach all Truth, and others again may add to the fundamental Principles of Religion, fundamental Errors, which I could eaſily ſhew the Church of *Rome* to be guilty of.

As to what relates to Chriſt's Injunction upon all Men, *to hear the Church, or elſe to be look'd upon as a Heathen and a Publican*, 'twas rather ſaid of the Synagogue, than of the Chriſtian Church, as not being yet eſtabliſhed when theſe words were uttered; or they are to be underſtood of the Univerſal Church.

I anſwer Secondly, that if we may apply the foregoing paſſages to any particular Church, they relate more to the *Greek* Church, than to the *Romiſh*: For it is not only ancienter (as all the World knows) than the Church of *Rome*, but at this

this very day of almoſt an equal extent, if we take in the vaſt numbers of thoſe that live in the Communion of the *Greek* Church, both in *Aſia* and *Europe*: For if we make a juſt calcule of all the Chriſtians in the vaſt Empire of the two *Czars* of *Moſcovy*, in *Greece* itſelf, and in all its Provinces, in *Egypt*, in ſeveral parts of *Aſia*, and eſpecially in the large Kingdom of the *Abyſſins*, &c. we ſhall find their number little inferiour, if not ſuperiour to that of the *Roman Catholicks*: And the *Greek* Church is ſo confident of Her being in the Right, that She looketh upon the Church of *Rome* as Schiſmatical. I muſt not forget in this place, that She can prove a conſtant Succeſſion of Biſhops from the Apoſtles downwards, more certainly than the Church of *Rome*, ſince *Calvin*, and ſeveral after him, have made it highly probable, that St. *Peter* was never at *Rome*, or at leaſt never Biſhop of *Rome*; which I much encline to believe upon this account, that the Scripture is wholly ſilent about this matter: Yet one would think that St. *Peter*'s ſtay at *Rome* near five and twenty Years, his being all this while Biſhop there, and at laſt Crucified with his head downwards, were Particulars conſiderable enough to be taken notice of by the Writer of the Acts of the Apoſtles, by St. *Paul*, or ſome of the Evangeliſts. Now to ſay St. *Peter* was at *Rome* when he wrote from *Babylon*, is to make him guilty of a flat Lye, or of a childiſh Equivocation; 'tis more natural to think, that he being the Apoſtle of the Jews, not of the Gentiles, was then either at *Babylon* in *Aſſyria*, or at *Babylon* in *Egypt*, now thought to be the *Grand Caire*, there being at that time a great number of Jews in both theſe Cities, about whoſe Converſion he was then buſied.

I ſhall only add, ſince 'tis agreed upon on all hands, that St. *John* ôutliv'd St. *Peter* many years; if St. *Peter* was Biſhop of *Rome*, and ſucceeded immediately by a new Vicar of Chriſt, as the *Romaniſts* do confidently tell us, it follows from hence, that Chriſt's beloved Apoſtle and Darling was under the Jurisdiction of the Biſhop of *Rome*, which the conſidering part of *Roman Catholicks*, as well as Proteſtants, will not, I fancy think very proper.

I ſhall reckon up no more of the Prerogatives of the *Greek* Church, what I have ſaid being only to ſhew, that whenſoever the word *Church* is made uſe of in Scripture, the *Grecians* may apply it to themſelves with a greater appearance of truth than the *Romaniſts*: but ſo they can no more prove themſelves Infallible, or the neceſſity of an Infallible Viſible Judge in their Church than the *Grecians* from the ſame places of Scripture can make out the neceſſity of an Infallible Viſible Judge in theirs.

I always wonder'd at the confidence of moſt *Roman Catholicks*, in aſſerting this Principle, which yet they can give no tolerable account of, when they are put upon the proving of it: for they are not yet well agreed, who is this Infallible Viſible Judge, ſome ſtanding up for the Pope, others for the General Councils, and others again for the Pope and the General Councils, and though they are more generally agreed upon the Pope and General Councils conjunctly, not ſeverally, yet if we conſider things impartially, we ſhall eaſily conclude, the Pope to be acknowledged by them the ſole Infallible Viſible Judge, ſince the General Councils have no authority to declare any Article of Divine Faith, without the Pope's Seal and Approbation; and, on the other ſide, the Decrees of a Provincial or National Synod, being once conſented to by the Pope, are of equal force with thoſe of General Councils, as being Articles of Divine Faith, to be believed by all *Roman Catholicks*, under pain of Damnation; which is a certain mark, that the Pope is the only Seat of this pretended Infallibility: as we Judge the King the only Seat of the Sovereign Power, not the Parliaments, becauſe no Act of theirs is of any force, without the King's Approbation and Conſent: yet, on the other hand, this Doctrine is flatly contradicted by the *Gallican* Church, yea, this Propoſition, *The Pope is not Infallible*, has been often defended at *Paris*, in preſence of the Popes Nuncio's and Legates: till then they are agreed among themſelves, who this Infallible Viſible Judge is, we are free to judge for ourſelves, being ſure we ſhall only be cenſured and puniſhed at the laſt day, for doing againſt our own judgment: for nothing elſe can be imputed to us as a ſin.

But

But not to diſmiſs yet this Subject, how can we, ſays the *Romaniſt*, be ſure of any Divine Truth, without the deciſion of an Infallible Viſible Judge?

To which I anſwer, Firſt, Beſides that we may be as ſure of any Divine Truth as they can be of their Infallible Viſible Judge; Scripture is plain in all things neceſſary to Salvation, otherwiſe it was not written for *Edification*, nor can it make thoſe that read it with a teachable temper of mind *wiſe unto Salvation*.

I anſwer, Secondly, We may come to a certain knowledge of Divine Truths by thoſe very Means your Infallible Viſible Judge is ſuppos'd to make uſe of for attaining to the ſame: for upon what grounds the firſt General Council, ſuppoſing it Infallible, believed the Articles of Faith, it defined? Sure not upon the Authority of another Council, ſince 'twas the firſt of all. Whatever then they ſhall produce for a ſufficient Foundation of their Belief, ſhall be a ſufficient Ground for me to build my Faith upon: Their Deciſions then are no Articles of my Faith, but the Grounds they proceeded upon may be Inducements to me to believe. We ought nevertheleſs to have great reſpect for General Councils; yet becauſe we are not to ſuppoſe them Infallible, without knowing why, we may, and ought to examine their Definitions at the Standard of the written Word, and of the general conſent of all Chriſtians in all Ages: for ſo doing we ſhall keep up with the Primitive Church, in caſe a Council in any material thing oppos'd it: neither can we upon this account be thought to preſume too much upon our own Skill; for though it be more probable that ten may be leſs apt to trip, than one, yet becauſe we are certain they may err, we are ſtill in the right, to try if really they have not err'd: their greater number being only an inducement to me to ſearch into the Reaſons they rely on, not to receive their final Deciſions, without any further examen: I muſt obſerve to you in this place, that conſidering with what zeal the *Romaniſts* contend for the Infallibility of their Church, I am ſatisfied ſome of them are fully perſwaded of its being an Article of Divine Faith; for if they thought it but a probable Opinion, they would not be ſo angry

angry with those that oppose it, since by *the Rule of Probables* they would allow in some measure of the very contradictory Opinion. I will then, to undeceive those that are of this Opinion, undertake to shew it to be no Article of Divine Faith, and by their own Principles too: for since they are not permitted the use of their own Reason in interpreting the Scripture, or Tradition itself, nothing can be an Article of Faith to them, but what is clearly decided by a General Council, but no General Council ever yet decided the Church to be Infallible, and far less the Church of *Rome*; therefore the Infallibility of the Church is no Article of Faith. I confess indeed, as I intimated in another place, the Infallibility of the Universal Church in this sence, that the whole Church shall never err, not that every particular part thereof, as the Church of *Rome*, or the *Greek* Church; and every private man may not err, but that by especial providence of God over his Church it shall never fall wholly away from the truth: and this cannot be but evident to an unprejudic'd Judgment, from the express Promises in Scripture, of Christ's assistance, even to the end of the World, notwithstanding all the Endeavours of Hell to prevail against it. But the *Romanist* means not only that his particular Church is Infallible in the sence I now mention'd, though I conceive this to be the Priviledge of the Universal Church only, but that there is in the Church of *Rome* an Infallible Visible Judge of Controversies, impower'd to tye us up to the belief of his Decisions, under pain of Eternal Damnation; and yet none of the General Councils, yea, not that of *Trent* itself, ever said *Anathema* to such as did not believe the Church of *Rome*, or the General Councils, to be infallible Judges of controversial Debates, though it seems since the Church of *Rome* was accused of gross Errors by the first Reformers, nothing was of so great moment for her, as the decision of this primary and fundamental Article, upon which all the others depended: the Councils I know anathematize such as refuse to subscribe to their Definitions, but hence it follows not that they declared their own Infallibility, since both Provincial and National Synods do the same, which yet are confessed to be fallible by the very *Romanists* themselves.

Thus

Thus I have argued hitherto only *ad hominem:* for though a General Council had declared itself Infallible, this would be no Article of Divine Faith, because the Infallibility of a General Council, when it defines itself Infallible, must be proved by an Evidence distinct from that of the Council itself, and therefore it can be no Article of Faith to a *Roman Catholick*, who must receive no Doctrine, under pain of Damnation, but what is clearly determined by a General Council.

I have dwelt too long upon this first Reason, why I cannot embrace the *Roman Catholick Religion*, which was, that I ever conceiv'd it founded upon a double false supposition, of its being both *Catholick*, and *Infallible.* I shall now go on with a more particular Account of my invincible aversion from the Faith of the Church of *Rome*, though at the same time, I profess none against the Members thereof.

I am then upon another account quite out of conceipt with the Church of *Rome:* her *Transubstantiation* I could never believe, and if I did, I should soon doubt of the confessed Fundamentals of the Christian Religion: for I conceive not how a considering man can heartily believe *Transubstantiation*, and not doubt of all our chief Mysteries, which I take to be the very existency of Christ in the World, his Passion, his Death, his Resurrection, and Ascension, *&c.* and all those wonderful Works he did during his stay upon Earth, in order to confirm Mankind in the belief of his being God as well as Man: now what proof have we of those primary Articles, but the constant Testimony of all Mens Senses, and must we not believe 'em upon the Authority of those that we are assured were eye-witnesses to all those things, which if no body had seen, no body now would believe? but if the eye may be deceiv'd in the contemplation of its proper object, when no condition necessary for its operation is wanting, what certitude have we of any of the fore-mentioned truths? for though I see the Bread in the Eucharist, though I both touch and taste Bread, though I both taste and see Wine, with all the rest of Mankind, yet if I turn a *Romanist*, I must believe what is so evidently contradicted by my senses, and confess my self mistaken. How then shall I con-

convince my self, or any other, that there was such a Man as Christ, that ever he arose from the Dead, that he ascended into Heaven, because I have no other evidence for all this, but that of my Senses; which imposing upon me in one case, I mean in the Mystery of *Transubstantiation*, I know not why they may not deceive me in any other; and so, if I believe *Transubstantiation*, I find my self forced from the belief of Christianity itself, as being founded upon things we know no otherways to be certainly true than by the testimony of the Senses: Thus Christ himself, who knew better than any other how to settle a floating or doubting mind, used no other proof to convince St. *Thomas*, than what was founded upon the evidence of sence, *Touch and feel*, said he, *for a Spirit has neither flesh nor bones*; which, supposing the truth of *Transubstantiation*, was a very inconsequential way of arguing: for had St. *Thomas* believed the *Transubstantiation*, he had answer'd our Saviour, since he was so apt to doubt, that as in the consecrated Bread, after the pronounciation of the words, *This is my Body*, he saw, touch'd, and tasted Bread, where yet there was no such thing, but another substance; so though he both felt, and touch'd his Body, his Bones, and his Flesh perhaps, under these appearances, there lay hid some other substance, as that of a Spirit, and not that of either Flesh or Bones, as under the appearances of Bread you must conceive no real Bread, but the same Body and Blood of Christ, which is now at the same time in Heaven.

Since then neither St. *Thomas*, so very apt to object against whatever he was not certain of, made this obvious Objection, nor Christ gave him any account why he should not believe his Senses in all other cases as well as in this, I do firmly believe *Transubstantiation* to have been planted in the World, as the Tares spoken of in the Gospel, while men were asleep, and in the night of ignorance and superstition. But, says the *Romanist*, you believe the *Trinity*, why then do you not believe the Mystery of *Transubstantiation?* 'Tis a hard case, that because I believe the *Trinity*, so expresly delivered to us in Scripture, I must likewise believe *Transubstantion*, and that there is no Bread in a consecrated Wafer, against the constant testimony of all mens senses, and though

the

the Scripture be wholly silent about the matter; yea, I am very certain, that the understanding *Romanists* rely not upon Scripture in this case, but meerly upon the Authority of their Church: they do I know raise some dust with these words of our Saviour, *This is my Body*: but what then? do they imply the destruction of the Bread? no sure, no more than these, *I am a true Vine*; *I am a Lyon of the Tribe of* Judah; *The Rock was Christ*, &c. do signifie the destruction of the substance of Christ.

I shall not insist upon this Subject, because it has been so often handled by others, especially by Dr. *Tillotson*, in his unanswerable Discourse against *Transubstantiation:* I must only add, that whatever is said in Scripture, about the eating of the Body, and the drinking of the Blood of Christ, ought to be understood in a spiritual sence, and that we do all this by Faith; for the Body and Blood of Christ being the Food of our Souls, we cannot feed upon them otherways than by Faith, and by Faith alone as opposite to Sence, because we receive not Christ by any of our Senses, since we cannot perceive him by any of 'em. The reception then of Christ, the eating of his Body, and drinking of his Blood, signifie nothing more, but that as our Bodies are fed and refresh'd by Bread and Wine, so are our Souls, after a spiritual manner, according to their own nature, refresh'd and strengthned by those Divine Graces, which as we may call the Emanations or Productions of Christ's Body and Blood, so we may say, they are the Body and Blood of Christ, as we sometimes say, *this is the Sun, the Sun is in this Room*, understanding only by this Expression, his Beams and Influences.

I shall conclude with a word or two, concerning the silence of all Antiquity about this Matter, whatever the *Romanists* may boast to the contrary. What Fathers of the Primitive Church do assert with our Adversaries, that the substance of Bread and Wine is destroyed in the Eucharist? do they not call the Elements Bread and Wine after Consecration? and assure us of their remaining so still after it? I shall instance but in some few Passages in order to make good what I say.

Tertullian in his first Book against *Marcion, cap.* 14. proving, that Christ made use of the Creatures, and neither rejected Water, Oyl, Milk, nor Honey, he adds, *neither did he reject Bread, by which he represents his own Body.* And in the third Book against *Marcion,* cap. 19. *Christ calls Bread his Body, that from thence you may understand, that he gave the figure of his Body to the Bread.*

St. *Jerome* in his Commentary on St. *Mark*, c. 26. has these observable words: *After the Typical Pascha was fulfilled, Christ took Bread, that comforts the hearts of men, and went to the Sacrament of the Pascha, that, as* Melchisedec *in the figure had done, asserting Bread and Wine, so he might also represent the truth of his Body and Blood.* In all which Passages the Sacramental Elements are called Bread and Wine, and the figure or representation of Christ's Body and Blood.

St. *Chrysostom* says *Epist. ad Cæsar. The Bread is thought worthy to be called the Body of our Lord:* And on these words, *the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit,* among the improper exceptions of Flesh, he says, *Comment. in Epist. ad Galatas,* cap. 5. *The Scriptures use to call the Mysteries by the name of Flesh, and sometimes the whole Church, saying she is the Body of Christ.*

Theoderet to the same purpose, in his first Dialogue says, *He who called his Natural Body Corn, and Bread, and also calls himself a Vine, likewise honoured these visible Symbols with the names of Body and Blood:* for things are often called in Scripture that which they signifie, as *the seven Kine were seven Years, the Seed is the Word of God*; that is, signifieth the Word of God.

Pope *Gelasius,* in his Book of the Two Natures of Christ, says, *The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ are a Divine Thing, for which reason we become partakers of the Divine Nature, and yet the Substance and Nature of Bread and Wine does not cease to be:* And adds a little after that, *their Nature still remains in its own property, as there remains one entire Christ: these things of which he is compounded remaining, to wit, his Two Natures remaining in their Properties.*

And

And St. *Chrysostom*, disputing against the *Apollinarists*, *Epistol. ad Cæsar. Monach.* confounding by a kind of consubstantiation the Two Natures of Christ, argues from this Sacrament to illustrate that Mystery:

As before the Bread is sanctified, we call it Bread, but when the Divine Grace has sanctified it, by the means of the Priest, it is freed from the name of Bread, and is thought worthy of the name of the Lord's Body, though the Nature of the Bread remains in it, and it is not said, that there are Two Bodies, but One Body of the Son, so the Divine Nature being join'd to the Body, both these make one Son, and one Person.

Theodoret again, in his first Dialogue, disputing against a Heretick denying to Christ a True Body, says, among other things, *that*, though to the purpose I omit for brevety's sake, *he who called his Natural Body Corn, and Bread, does likewise honour the Visible Symbols with the name of his Body and Blood, not changing the Nature, but adding Grace to Nature.* And having forc'd the Heretick to confess, that the Bread and Wine were the Symbols and Types of Christ's Body and Blood, hence he draws this conclusion, *that Christ had a True Body.*

Theodoret in his second Dialogue against the *Eutychians*, who believed Christ's Body to have been swallowed up by its Union to the Divine Nature, representeth to us the Heretick arguing thus:

As the Symbols of the Body and Blood of our Lord were one thing before the Priestly Invocation, and after that were changed, and are different from what they were, so the Body of our Lord, after the Assumption, was changed into the Divine Substance: but he immediately answers, that he was catched in the Net he laid for others: *for the Mystical Symbols, after the sanctification, do not depart from their own nature, for they continue in their former substance, figure, and form, and are both visible and palpable as they were before.*

'Tis easie for any impartial man, considering these foregoing Passages, and the Fathers way of arguing against the *Apollinarists*, and the *Eutychians*, who denied Christ to have had a True Body, that they were perswaded that the Substance of Bread and Wine remain'd after Consecration, since

hence they proved, that the Humane Nature in Christ was not swallowed up after its Assumption, but remain'd after the Union, as the Substance of Bread remains in its own Nature after its Consecration: for had they believed Christ's Body to be under the Accidents of Bread in the Eucharist, by vertue of the Words of Consecration, how easie was it for them to prove the reality of Christ's Body after its Union to the Divine Nature, by saying he could not but have a True Body, since it was in the Sacrament under the appearances of Bread and Wine: which Argument they never made use of, but, on the contrary, proved always the remaining of the Humane Nature after its Assumption, by the remaining of the Substanee of Bread after the Priestly Consecration.

From all this it appears, that the Fathers are on our side, unless you'll have 'em to argue like mad-men, after this manner: *The Appearances, or (as you speak) the Accidents of Bread and Wine remain still after the Consecration, therefore the Substance of the Humane Nature remain'd in Christ after its Union to the Divinity.* For had the Fathers believed *Transubstantiation*, had not the *Eutychians* retorted the Argument, *The Accidents of Bread and Wine remain without the Substance after Consecration, therefore the Properties of the Humane Nature remain in Christ after its Assumption, without the Substance of its Humanity?* But if we suppose the Fathers believed, that the Substance of Bread remain'd after it was consecrated, we shall find they had a great advantage from hence, to illustrate the Mystery of the Incarnation, by arguing thus, as they often did, as the Blessing of the Bread did not destroy its substance, so the Union of the Humanity in Christ, to the Divinity, was not all destructive to at its Nature: though after all this, no man, not byassed by real Prejudices, can doubt of the Doctrine of the Fathers.

I shall add one Reflection more for a farther illustration of the Matter.

The *Jews*, and the *Gentiles* especially, insulted over the Christians, for believing inconceivable Mysteries, as for instance, the *Trinity*, and more particularly the *Incarnation*; upon the account of which, as St. *Paul* himself intimates somewhere,

they

they were reputed Fools, and derided every where by the Gentiles. Now what if the Chriſtians of thoſe Primitive Times had believ'd and profeſs'd, that a little piece of Bread, after ſome few words pronounc'd over it, ceas'd to be Bread, and was no more what it had been, though it kept ſtill all the outward appearances of the ſame being, as colour, figure, ſhape and taſte, *&c.*

With what ſcorn, with what diſdain, and deſervedly too, had they not look'd upon, and them as Men not in their right wits, who denied what they ſaw and felt, with all Mankind, to be what they really ſaw, felt, and taſted too? The Gentiles, who neglected no occaſion of inſulting over the poor Chriſtians in thoſe early times of the Church, had never ſlipt this which gave them ſo conſiderable advantage over them; and their ſilence upon the whole matter, is to me a demonſtration, that no ſuch thing was ever believed by the Chriſtians of the Primitive Church.

'Tis a very weak Evaſion of moſt *Roman Catholicks*, to ſay, that Tranſubſtantiation not being oppoſed in the Primitive Church, was therefore generally believed then, becauſe by the ſame way of arguing one may prove, that every new broach'd Opinion was held generally by all Mankind from the very firſt Age of the World, upon this account, that no body contradicted it. Which is as unreaſonable as if one would argue thus; None of the Ancients, either Philoſophers or Phyſicians, ever oppoſed the Circulation of the Blood, therefore this Hypotheſis was taught and embrac'd by all the ancient Phyſicians, which no Man of ſenſe will think a legal Concluſion.

The reaſon then why Tranſubſtantion was not oppos'd in the Primitive Church, could be no other but becauſe this Doctrine was not as yet broach'd, and in being in thoſe Days. No wonder then, if what no body had ſo much as dream't of, could not be debated and oppoſed; yea, ſince 'tis granted, that in the firſt ſeven hundred years of the Church it was not contradicted, we muſt needs conclude that in all that time 'twas not heard of: For is it conformable to common ſenſe or reaſon, to think, that none would ſtand in oppoſition to a Doctrine, that (to ſay nothing of its contradiction to the cleareſt

clearest evidence of sense) drew a long with it so strange consequences as this does; such I take to be the *being of a Body, though by Divine Power, in more places at once, or without its natural dimensions, and every crumb of a Wafer, the possibility of its being produced at the same time in several places, it still yet remaining the same body, the actual separation of the accidents, such as Taste, Colour, Smell, Figure from all substance in which they subsist, the inconveniencies that every one may fancy to himself in case Christ's Body come into ours, or be eaten by Vermin, its being corrupted, digested*, &c.

I know, the eating of Human Flesh, and *Thyestian* Suppers, were reproach'd to the first Christians upon the account of the *Gnostick*, who called themselves Christians, but this related not at all to the Sacrament of the *Eucharist*, as 'tis evident by the Fathers Answer to that Charge, with a flat denial of the Matter of Fact, without offering any Explication relating to the *Eucharist*; which is a clear demonstration they thought not this charge grounded on the Doctrine of the *Eucharist*.

I am then satisfied, that Transubstantiation being so absurd both in its self and its consequences, could not but be opposed so soon as 'twas openly profess'd: And indeed, from the second Council of *Nice* (as every one knows) to the fourth Council of *Latran*, it met with great opposition from the learned'st Doctors of the *Latine* Church. And since that time it occasioned in every Age the withdrawing of great Kingdoms, and vast numbers of People from the Communion of the Church of *Rome*, and I think it may be sufficient ground for me not to joyn with it now.

But there is as yet another thing, which I fancy you would not expect, that hinders me from being your Convert; which is the Novelty of the *Roman Catholick* Religion, whatsoever may be your boasts and pretences to Antiquity. For sure I am, the Church of *Rome* is no more now what it was of old, than the City of *Rome* now in being, is the same which was known to the World in *Augustus* his time by the same Name. I know indeed, you give us a large Catalogue of your Popes from St. *Peter*'s time, to this very day: But besides that, it is highly probable, since the Scripture tells us nothing relating

ting to this matter, that St. *Peter* was neither Biſhop of *Rome*, nor ever at *Rome*, you can pretend to no peculiar Prerogative upon this account, which ſeveral Chriſtian Churches may not lay as good a claim too as you can do. The *Jewiſh* Chriſtian Church and the *Greek* were before Yours, yea, the latter can prove her Antiquities by a continued Succeſſion of Biſhops down from the Apoſtles, to our times. The like may be eaſily made out by the *Abyſſins* and *Maronites* of late, partly reconcil'd to the Church of *Rome*: Yea, *England* itſelf received not the Chriſtian Faith from the Church of *Rome*, as ſome of your Friends inconſiderately boaſt of, ſince 'tis certain that *Auguſtin* the Monk found the Chriſtian Religion already eſtabliſhed in *England*, when he firſt came into this Iſland. But what we ought to lay the greateſt ſtreſs upon, is, the Antiquity of Doctrine, which being the very Soul and Life of Religion, is chiefly to be regarded in this debate. I deny not but that the Name of *Roman Catholick* is of an older date than that of *Proteſtant*; but new Names being often impoſed on very ſlight occaſions, we are only to take notice of the thing itſelf, not of the Name, which may not be at all times the ſame.

Let us firſt then conſider the neceſſary Articles of the *Proteſtant* Church, by which I mean ſuch as are to be Believed, if known, under pain of Damnation, for theſe only make up the Eſſential part of Religion. I find then, that whatever the *Proteſtants* Believe now, is the the ſame that was Taught by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and Believed by the Primitive Chriſtians, the ſtandard of their Belief being no other but the Apoſtolick Creed, and the Scripture, as Interpreted by the Chriſtians of the Primitive Church. Whatever then was an Article of Divine Faith in thoſe days, is ſtill ſo to the Proteſtants of our times, and nothing elſe, ſuch I reckon to be the Incarnation, the Trinity, the Paſſion and Reſurrection of Chriſt, and in one word, whatever is contained evidently in Scripture, or may be by a neceſſary conſequence deduc'd from it; and all this being of the ſame date with the firſt and cleareſt days of the Church, we muſt of neceſſity confeſs, that that the *Proteſtant* Faith is the old Faith, and no new Contrivance of the firſt Reformers, as the leſs underſtanding ſort

of

of *Romaniſts* ſeem to believe, when they ask us where our Religion was before *Luther* and *Calvin*? Which Queſtion is eaſily Anſwer'd by this obvious diſtinction, that if by *our Religion*, they meant the primary and fundamental Articles of Chriſtianiſm, taught by Chriſt, and held by his Apoſtles and the Primitive Church, it was before *Luther* and *Calvin*, all theſe things being believed before *Luther* and *Calvin* by the Primitive Chriſtians: But if by *our Religion*, they underſtand that diſtinct Body of Men, who have ſeparated from the Errors of the Church of *Rome*? the Queſtion comes to nothing, as implying only whether they were ſeparated and reformed before the days of *Luther* and *Calvin*, which no *Proteſtant* affirms. But now on the other hand, if we look narrowly into the Church of *Rome*, and conſider it as a diſtinct Body from other Chriſtian Churches, we ſhall eaſily diſcover it to be compounded of meer Novelties, whether we have regard to its Doctrine, or to its Rites and Ceremonies, or way of Worſhip: For thoſe additional Articles of Tranſubſtantiation, Invocation of Saints, Image-Worſhip, Purgatory, *&c.* were certainly unknown to the firſt three Centuries, as has been ſufficiently made out by *Proteſtant* Writers, or at leaſt, which makes as well for my purpoſe, they were not then Articles of Divine Faith, and to be Believed under pain of Damnation; but now they are neceſſary and eſſential parts of a *Roman Catholick* Faith, who becauſe of the Deciſions of ſome of the latter General Councils, muſt believe, againſt the cleareſt evidence of ſenſe, the deſtruction of Bread in a conſecrated Wafer, as likewiſe of Wine after its conſecration by a Prieſt, the lawfulneſs of Image-Worſhip, and of the Invocation of the Saints, the being of Purgatory, or of a third Place, where the Souls are to be puniſh'd before they enter into Heaven: All this I ſay, and whatever is determined by a General Council, he muſt believe with the ſame firmneſs he believes the Exiſtency of God, the Divinity of Chriſt, the Trinity, and all the other primary Articles of the Chriſtian Religion; and this I am ſure was never done by the Chriſtians of the Primitive times.

'Tis

'Tis clear then, that the additional Doctrine of the Church of *Rome* is a new Contrivance of the later Ages, ſince now 'tis made neceſſary for Catholicks to believe, and was not then: For to ſay 'twas believed *implicitly*, beſides that this is the greateſt piece of non-ſenſe imaginable, becauſe it implieth, that a man believeth he knows not what, it makes not againſt what I was ſaying, For what was believed then (to make uſe of this nonſenſical Expreſſion) *implicitly*, is now to be believed *explicitly*, under pain of Eternal Damnation, which is ſtill a Novelty, and a ſtrange one too, if duly examined.

The being of an Infallible Viſible Judge was unknown to the pureſt times of Chriſtianity. For had the firſt Chriſtians believed any ſuch, without doubt they had appeal'd to him to put a ſtop to the growth of Errors and Hereſies that in thoſe very days diſturb'd the Church: But ſince they never made any ſuch Appeal, we have good reaſon to ſay, the Primitive Chriſtians never acknowledged any ſuch Judge.

I ſhould willingly learn from the *Roman Catholicks*, if the Pope had the ſame Power of old, he has now? Was he look'd upon by the three firſt Centuries, as the ſole Vicar of Chriſt upon Earth? One need but turn over the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, to know how, and by what policy he came by degrees to the preſent pitch he now is in, though in the firſt days of the Church, the Biſhop of *Rome* was under the Command of Temporal Princes, no leſs than other Subjects are.

As to the Practices and Rites of the Church of *Rome*, they are but late Inventions, and moſt part, point blanck contrary to thoſe of the Primitive Church. The denying of the Cup to the Laity, is a convincing Inſtance of this; it was inſtituted for all indifferently, *Drink ye all of this*, and was for the ſpace of thirteen Ages and more granted to the People, as well as to the Prieſts; but by an order of a *Romiſh* Council, notwithſtanding Chriſt's expreſs Command to the contrary, this Primitive Cuſtome was laid aſide upon the ſlighteſt and moſt frivolous grounds imaginable, which upon no occaſion, how plauſible ſoever, was to be changed, as being ſo ſolemnly inſtituted by the Founder of the Chriſtian Religion, Chriſt himſelf.

The Publick Service in an Unknown Tongue, was the

known practice of the Church: *For six hundred years* (saith not *Origen?*) *the* Grecians *in their Prayers use the* Greek, *and the* Romans *the* Latine *Tongue*; *and so every one, according to his Language, prayeth unto God, and praiseth him as he is able.*

And yet this Ancient and Apostolick Custom is abolish'd by the *Romish* Clergy, as if they had received a greater Power from Christ, than the Apostles themselves, whose Power was only *for Edification*, but not *for Destruction*, as St. *Paul* tells us, 2 *Cor.* 10. 8. and proves convincingly throughout a whole Chapter, that the performing of Publick Service, and especially Praying in an Unknown Tongue, is quite contrary to *Edification.*

The Invocation of Saints was not in use in the three first Centuries, which, besides the silence of all Records upon this Matter, may be made out from hence, that the blessed Virgin began to be Prayed to, only in the Fourth Century, as I could shew: now 'tis more than probable, that she being the holiest among Women, was the first of all honoured this way, unless we suppose, against common sence and reason, that the primitive Christians, during the three first Centuries, directed their Prayers to the other inferior Saints, without ever having recourse to the more powerful Mediation of the blessed Virgin.

'Tis well known, that Image-Worship was never the Practice of the Primitive Christians, who could scarce allow of the Art of Painting, so zealous they were of the breach of the Second Commandment, which they generally thought to reach thus far. They were it seems of opinion, that God being a Spirit, was to be adored in Spirit and Truth, and not under any corporal shape, as they might easily gather from the severe punishment of the *Israelites*, for adoring the *golden Calf*, whom they knew to be nothing else but a meer representation of God, since they themselves had furnish'd the Matter this dull Idol was made of.

Neither can it be made appear, that Prayer for the Dead, the Foundation of Purgatory, was practis'd in the Primitive times, after the manner 'tis now used in the Church of *Rome*: for what is said in the Second Book of the *Maccabees*, to this purpose, is of no moment, because this pretended Scripture

is

is not Canonical, and was not received as ſuch by the *Jews*.

As to what relates to ſuch Practices, as are the natural conſequences of *Tranſubſtantiation*, they were unknown to the Primitive Chriſtians, becauſe *Tranſubſtantiation* itſelf was a thing unheard of among them: they knew not what the *Maſs* was, if we take it with all thoſe pompous Ceremonies that go along with it; we can ſhew how it got into this ſhape, by the additions from time to time of ſeveral Popes: and do not moſt men know the firſt and late Birth of the *Adoration and Elevation of the Hoſt*, of *Proceſſions*, and the *Doctrine of Concomitants*, and of all the other Rites and Ceremonies lately ſprang up from the belief of *Tranſubſtantiation*: 'tis no doubt, upon the account of this ſtrange Doctrine, that the Euchariſt is not adminiſtred now as 'twas in the Primitive times.

When 'twas put into the hands of the Receiver, given to Children, truſted to Boys, or Common Perſons, to be carried to the Dying, when the Remains were eaten up, and in ſome places burnt, in other places conſumed by Children, or by the Clergy, or made uſe of in Cataplaſms: to which we may add the mixing of the conſecrated Chalice with Ink to ſign the Excommunication of Hereticks, which would now paſs for a great Sacrilege, becauſe of the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, that was not held then: But thoſe are not the only Reaſons, though ſufficient enough, had I no other, why I cannot ſubmit to the Church of *Rome*. I would fain then go upon ſure Grounds if I could, eſpecially in Matters regarding the Eternal Welfare of my Soul: Now, if I turn a *Roman Catholick*, and in caſe Baptiſm be neceſſary to Salvation, as the Church of *Rome* teacheth, I ſhall always be afloat, and uncertain whether I be baptized, or not; becauſe the Council of *Trent* allows of no valid Baptiſm, without ſome foregoing intention of the Prieſt: but if the Prieſt or Miniſter had either a contrary intention, or through forgetfulneſs not at all; for I conceive nothing of this to be impoſſible. I am at a loſs whether I be in a ſtate of Salvation, or not, as all thoſe Prieſts may juſtly queſtion, according to their own Principles, who were Conſecrated by a late *French* Biſhop, ſince he ingenuouſly declared in the Words of a Dying Man, that he never intended the Ordination of any of thoſe

that he had consecrated Priests: for the intention of the Bishop is thought as necessary to the valid Consecration of a Priest, as to the being of a real and valid Baptism: I should likewise, upon the same grounds, doubt of the Being of a true Pope, of true General Councils, if their Members must be Priests and Bishops, because if they never be Consecrated, (which I can never be certain of) they have no Commission, says the *Romanist*, to decide Matters of Faith.

May not I be allowed to add in this place, that should I go over to the Church of *Rome*, I would have reason to question, If there were any such Book in the World as the Bible, yea, or any thing else? For I can give no surer proof of the being of things that fall within the sphere of my Senses, than my very Senses themselves: yet I am told, that my Eyes do deceive me in the Eucharist, and what I see there, is not really Bread, though I both feel, see, and taste it, and find it likewise a good substantial Nourishment for my Body: now my Head turns round, and I am ready to fancy the whole World to be but a meer appearance, without either solidity or substance; yea, I shall perhaps run myself into greater extreams, and take all Christ's Miracles to be but meer deceptions of the sight, because they cannot be proved otherwise than by the testimony of the Senses, which could be no cogent Argument to a zealous *Romanist*, as I would then pretend to be.

There is yet another thing, in case of my Conversion, I should extreamly stumble at, which is this, That I could not believe the Church of *Rome* to be Infallible, upon the account of her own Authority; for she allowing no other Infallible Judge but herself, I must believe her Infallible, because she tells me, she cannot Err, though without giving me any good reason for it: And this I could not easily consent to, as loving to act rationally in every thing, especially in Matters of the Highest Concern.

I am yet frightned from the *Roman Catholick Religion* upon another account, which you will be somewhat concern'd to hear, but that I cannot help; I must tell you freely my mind, since you have desired me to be ingenuous with you:

I was

I was always Loyal to the Royal Family, and with the Grace of God ever ſhall be, yet if I embrace the *Roman Catholick Religion* heartily, and with all its Tenents, I know not but that I may begin to waver in this main Point of my Duty, by acknowledging another Power upon Earth above that of my own Prince, which I look upon as a diſpoſition at leaſt, if not a full ſtep towards an unnatural Rebellion, in caſe theſe two Authorities ſhould claſh together, and I were to take party for either.

I pretend not nevertheleſs to ſay, that a *Roman Catholick* cannot be a good Subject, God forbid I ſhould think ſo; but I know ſo much of their Religion, that I may ſafely venture to ſay, they owe their Loyalty to their Generous Temper and Good Nature, rather than to the Principles of the Religion they profeſs. To be free with you then, were I a *Roman Catholick*, I could not, I fancy, have the ſame reſpect for my Prince, that I now have; for I would be oblig'd to acknowledge the Pope above him, but *in ſpiritualibus* only, you'll ſay: what then? he is rather more his ſuperiour, than leſs, by this very reſtriction: for as the Spirit is nobler than the Body, and the Spiritual Power of a higher order than that which regards only Temporal Concerns, and ſince the Spirit gives Life and Motion to the Body, whoever is Maſter of the Spiritual, has likewiſe a great influence upon the Temporal: So I have reaſon to fear, ſhould I once believe and grant the Pope's Superiority over Princes in Spiritual Matters, that I ſhould likewiſe fancy he had at leaſt an indirect Power over their Temporal Concerns, yea, I would of courſe acknowledge a Depoſing Power in the Pope, in caſe my Prince embrac'd what you call *Hereſie*: for could I then reject the Council of *Lateran*, aſſerting it? Whether it be an Article of Divine Faith among you, or not, I ſhall not enquire in this place; but ſure I am, 'tis a Doctrine allowed of by your Church, and was never yet cenſured at *Rome*, where many leſs dangerous Opinions have been condemn'd.

I am then quite out of conceit with your Religion, ſince I cannot embrace it, without endangering my Loyalty, in caſe I mind to live up to the pitch of its real Principles: but 'tis all one to me, ſo long as I remain a *Proteſtant*, what Religion my

my Prince is of, though I could wiſh he were of the ſame I profeſs, becauſe his Authority over me, and my indiſpenſable Obligation to ſubmit to him, do not depend upon his Opinion or Religion, but upon his Birth-right; yet have we not reaſon to doubt, if the zealous ſort of *Roman Catholicks* would not think it lawful to take Arms againſt their Prince, turn'd a Heretick, ſince the *French* League, againſt *Henry* the Fourth, was upon this very account ſtyl'd *Holy*; and had I not been particularly acquainted with the Principles of the Church of *Rome*, I had never conceived how it came to paſs, that ſuch great numbers of learned, and well-meaning Men too, could be guilty of ſuch a horrible wickedneſs, as that was, and forget themſelves ſo far as to pretend Holineſs in an open Rebellion againſt their lawful Prince: This confirms me more and more, though a Council of *Lateran* had not declared the Matter, in the Opinion I was always of, that by the very Principles of your Church, there is ſome allowance for Subjects in this caſe.

I am then more ſatisfied with the Loyalty of a *Proteſtant*, eſpecially of the Church of *England*, who acknowledgeth the Prince to be Supreme Governor over all his Subjects, and Sovereign Judge in all Caſes, than with that of a *Roman Catholick*, who ſeems to ſet Limits to his Power, by ſuch Reſtrictions as neither Reaſon nor Scripture can warrant.

Thus, *Sir*, I have done with the promiſed Account of ſome of thoſe *Prejudices*, (as you was pleas'd to call them) that have kept me hitherto in the Purity of the Chriſtian Faith: if you think ſtill they are not ſolid Reaſons, but meer prejudicate Opinions, and ill-grounded Fancies, it will become you to make good the Charge, and free yourſelf from the Suſpicion I may juſtly entertain of your being guilty of that very Crime you ſo confidently, and with more Zeal than Knowledge reproach to others.

Your very Humble

Servant.

F I N I S.

A Catalogue *of Books, Printed for, and Sold by* John Taylor *at the Ship in St.* Paul's *Church-Yard.*

1. THe Travels of *Monſieur de Thevenot* into the *Levant*, in Three Parts, *viz.* I. Into *Turkey*, II. *Perſia*, III. The *Eaſt-Indies*, new done out of *French*, in *Folio.*

2. A Free Enquiry into the Vulgarly Receiv'd Notion of Nature; made in an Eſſay, Addreſs'd to a Friend. By the Honourable *Robert Boyle*, Eſq; Fellow of the Royal Society. The ſame is alſo in Latin, for the Benefit of Forreigners.

3. The Martyrdom of *Theodora* and of *Didymus.* By a Perſon of Honour.

4. The Declamations of *Quintilian*, being an Exercitation or Praxis upon his Twelve Books, concerning the Inſtitution of an Orator. Tranſlated (from the *Oxford* Theatre Edition) into *Engliſh*, by a Learned and Ingenious Hand, with the Approbation of ſeveral Eminent School-Maſters in the City of *London.*

5. *England*'s Happineſs, in a Lineal Succeſſion, and the Deplorable Miſeries which ever attended Doubtful Titles to the Crown, Hiſtorically demonſtrated from the Wars between the two Houſes of *York* and *Lancaſter.*

6. *Academia Scientiarum:* Or, The Accademy of Sciences. Being a Short and Eaſie Introduction to the Knowledge of the Liberal Arts and Sciences; with the Names of thoſe Famous Authors that have written on every particular Science. In *Engliſh* and *Latin.* By *D. Abercromby*, M. D.

7. Publick

7. Publick Devotion, and the Common Service of the Church of *England* Justified and Recommended to all honest and well-meaning (however prejudic'd) Dissenters. By a Lover of his Countrey, and the Protestant Religion.

8. The Best Exercise. To which is added, a Letter to a Person of Quality, concerning the Holy Lives of the Primitive Christians. By *Anthony Horneck*, Preacher at the *Savoy*.

9. The Mother's Blessing: Or, The Godly Counsel of a Gentlewoman not long since deceas'd, left behind for her Children. By Mrs. *Dorothy Leigh*.

10. The Inchanted Lover: Or, The Amours of *Narcissus* and *Aurelia*. A Novel. By *Peter Bellon*, Author of the Pilgrim.